



# Program Evaluation Summary

Vol. 5 No. 1

September 2006

## Macon County Redeploy Illinois pilot program aids juvenile offenders

By Jessica Ashley and Phillip Stevenson

A successful Redeploy Illinois pilot program initiated in Macon County provides community-based services in lieu of prison time to non-violent juvenile felony offenders.

Redeploy Illinois Public Act 093-0641 took effect Dec. 31, 2003. The Act provides counties with funding for community-based services, which can include opportunities in education, recreation, community service, crisis and health intervention, and alternative forms of detention for non-violent youth who would otherwise be committed to the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC).

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention research suggests that non-violent youth are less likely to be involved in subsequent delinquent behavior if they

remain in their communities and receive appropriate services that address their underlying needs. Community-based options for juvenile offenders also are generally less costly than institutional care in correctional facilities.

Redeploy Illinois programs are being implemented at four pilot sites in Illinois: Macon County, the 2nd Judicial Circuit (serving Crawford, Edwards, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jefferson, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, Wayne, and White counties), St. Clair County, and Peoria County. By accepting the funds to provide community-based services to delinquent youth, pilot sites are obligated to reduce the number of youth IDOC commitments by 25 percent from the average number of commitments for the previous three years.

This *Program Evaluation Summary* describes an evaluation of Macon County's Redeploy pilot program. The evaluation was supported by a grant awarded to the Authority by the Illinois Department of Human Services.

The pilot program, Community ACCESS (Alternative Collaborative Change Education Support Success), was set up to offer individualized services to juvenile participants based on their specific risk factors and needs. Probation officers monitored participants, and a research team evaluated the program's implementation and impact between Jan. 1 and Oct. 31, 2005. A variety of methods were employed in the evaluation, including surveys, interviews, site visits, and focus groups with juvenile justice system personnel and service providers.

### Program implementation indicators

The evaluation team selected six key performance indicators that follow the principles of balanced and restorative justice (BARJ) to assess the program. BARJ is a justice philosophy described in the Illinois Juvenile Court Act



Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor  
Sheldon Sorosky, Chairman  
Lori G. Levin, Executive Director

### Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

120 S. Riverside Plaza, Suite 1016  
Chicago, Illinois 60606

Phone: 312-793-8550, TDD: 312-793-4170,

Fax: 312-793-8422

website: [www.icjia.state.il.us](http://www.icjia.state.il.us)

Program Evaluation Summaries are derived from program evaluations funded or conducted by the Authority. The full evaluation reports are available from the Authority.

For more information about this or other publications from the Authority, please contact the Authority's Criminal Justice Information Clearinghouse or visit our website.

Printed by authority of the State of Illinois, September 2006.

that recognizes victims, offenders, and communities have an equally important role and stake in the justice process. BARJ's three main goals include repairing harm to victims by making offenders face accountability for their actions; averting repeat delinquent behavior by developing offenders' pro-social skill competencies; and ensuring community safety by fostering responsible relationships among all community members.

### Implementation factors described

Macon's program involved community, family members, and crime victims. Implementation performance indicators include:

- Program alignment with the Act.
- Participant selection process.
- Communication and program awareness.
- Service options and provider selection.
- Resource utilization.
- Assessment method.

### Program alignment with the Act

The Redeploy Illinois Act contains specific purpose and goal statements and evaluation indicators for counties utilizing its funds for programs. The Macon County program met seven of 13 key factors, termed alignment indicators, noting its compliance with the Act's stipulations. Included among these indicators were establishing or expanding local alternatives to incarceration; establishing a continuum of community-based sanctions and treatment alternatives to incarceration; assessing and evaluating services or programs; and providing individualized vocational, mental health, substance abuse, and supervision services or programs.

The program was found to be near alignment (in compliance) with five indicators, including providing individualized educational services or programs and individualized service coordination; focusing on juveniles who otherwise would be held in confinement; restoring the offender to the community; and excluding capital expenditures, renovations or remodeling, or personal probation costs from budgeting. The final alignment indicator noted, which dealt with reduction of secure confinement of juvenile offenders in IDOC, was nearing compliance but the evaluation period ended prior to completion of the program's first year.

### Participant selection process

Macon County's program served 22 juvenile participants during the evaluation period and was projected to serve

26 during the first year. According to the Act, juveniles convicted of first degree murder or a Class X forcible felony are ineligible for participation in the program.

Macon County participants were at high risk for recidivism. Participants were required to be at least 13 years old; under consideration for possible commitment to IDOC due to their current offense; eligible for a probation term for one year or more; and convicted of a non-forcible felony. The program could not be used as an alternative to juvenile court involvement or as part of a plea agreement.

### Communication and program awareness

Several communication methods contributed to creating awareness of and promoting the program, including meetings, newspaper or newsletter articles, phone calls, and e-mail updates. Two surveys of juvenile justice system personnel and service providers were conducted in 2005 to determine changes in awareness and perceptions of the program. The number of people indicating they were "very familiar" or "familiar" with the program increased slightly between June and November of that year.

### Service options and provider selection

The Macon County program offered a variety of services for each participant determined on a case-by-case basis. A focus group of juvenile justice system personnel identified program needs, including:

- Substance abuse and mental health treatment.
- A detention center.
- Reward for, or accountability of, parents
- Flexible funding for families for bill payments or treatment costs.
- Education/information for victims of juvenile crime.

### Resource utilization

During the evaluation period juvenile probation officer caseloads ranged between 35 and 44 cases. The number of contacts and time commitment required for each case depended on risk level and the complexity of the case.

### Assessment method

The Macon County program used the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument, a tool that gathers information to determine appropriate services for participants. Other assessment tools examined mental health and substance abuse issues.

Figure 1

Macon County Redeploy Illinois pilot program rewards and consequences for participants

| <i>Program rewards</i>                       | <i>Program consequences</i>                    |
|--|--|
| Coupons (family dinner, video rental)        | Home confinement                               |
| Field trip, shopping, sports, art activities | Remove privileges                              |
| Use child/family as positive example         | Increase supervision and intervention services |
| Verbal praise                                | Threat of "time out"                           |
| Specific lessons (horseback riding, piano)   | Verbal warning or reprimand                    |
| Early termination from probation             | More frequent court dates                      |
| Certificate of completion                    | Decrease in allowance                          |
| Party for completing service or phase        | Earlier curfew                                 |
| Referral to community restorative board      | Hold parent/guardian accountable               |
| Reduction in number of group meetings        | Issue warrant for failure to appear in court   |
| Teen court program participation             | Meeting on lack of progress with family        |
| Transportation for family visits             | Threat of IDOC                                 |
| Recognition for achieving goals              | Punishment from family                         |
| Mentor a fellow youth in the program         | Use of "thinking report" to identify errors    |
| Family meeting to discuss growth/change      | Lecture  |
| Encouragement/recognition by a judge         | Secure detention                               |

**Program impact indicators**

Selected performance indicators assessed the program’s impact, including use of program rewards and consequences, and program services and sanctions. Other assessment indicators included reductions in IDOC commitments and in detention and probation utilization rates. The program’s impact on participants, families, and victims was also noted.

**Program rewards and consequences**

Probation, the court, and schools used many rewards and consequences to encourage juveniles to successfully complete the program (*Figure 1*). The evaluation indicated that the rewards and consequences were effective.

**Program services and sanctions**

Participants who successfully completed individualized treatment were discharged from the program. Services include cognitive education (such as anger management,

life skills); alternatives to detention (home detention, electronic monitoring); community restorative boards; community service; crisis intervention; home intervention; mental health treatment; recreation; relationship building; and vocational education.

The pilot program employed local community restorative boards made up of small groups of citizens who are prepared by intensive training to conduct face-to-face meetings with offenders and develop agreements with them. The boards allow community members to meet with juveniles and their families, both to help restore community relationships and to hold the juveniles accountable for harm caused by their actions.

**Reduction in IDOC commitments**

Macon County’s juvenile IDOC commitment average from 2001 to 2003 was 53 youth. For the program period the projected number of juveniles committed was 34, representing a 36 percent commitment reduction. Based on

the county's Redeploy Illinois service delivery budget, and the projected 26 juvenile participants served by the program, the projected cost per juvenile was estimated at \$16,238. In state fiscal year 2005, courts admitted 1,563 youth to IDOC at a per capita annual cost of \$70,827.

### Detention and probation utilization rate

The number of youth from Macon County admitted to detention dropped from 119 in 2002 to 96 in 2004. During the first 10 months of 2005, 80 youth were admitted to detention.

### Impact on participants, families, and victims

The overall short-term impact of the pilot program on juvenile participants was positive based on interviews with representatives from the juvenile justice system, the advisory board, victims, and family members of juvenile offenders.

### Recommendations

Evaluators indicated program success is contingent upon continued efforts to increase awareness and foster positive attitudes and perceptions of the program. Also, key stakeholders—such as juvenile justice professionals, service providers, victims and families, schools, and the community at large—need to be educated about the program, and collaboration between all involved should be encouraged.

Other recommendations included that technology tools and systems currently used to capture, track, and generate reports for the program be reviewed. An information technology strategy should be developed and implemented, along with an analysis of required data items to confirm that the necessary program information is being collected.

Also, evaluators recommended the program expand services targeted for individual juvenile offenders. Efforts also should be continued to establish additional community restorative boards, as these boards allow community involvement and hold juveniles accountable for their actions.

Final recommendations included clarifying funding and selection criteria for juvenile participants, developing a process and plan to assure continued funding, and reviewing program criteria to assure that all eligible youth in the target population are included. In addition, pilot sites need to be made aware of their latitude in adapting selection criteria to meet local needs.

### Conclusion

The Macon County Redeploy Illinois program met its objectives, as listed in Redeploy Illinois Public Act 093-0641. The program implemented community-based sanctions, treatment alternatives, and services for juvenile offenders who otherwise would have been incarcerated. Macon County's 2005 projected reductions in IDOC commitments exceeded the 25 percent target. Additionally, program costs were estimated to be well below the cost for committing juveniles to IDOC. Finally, the changes in the county's juvenile justice system indicated positive outcomes for juveniles and their families.



### Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

The Macon County Redeploy Illinois evaluation was conducted by Ghenno Senbetta, Ph.D., and Darryl L. Jinkerson, Ph.D. This summary was written by ICJIA Research Analyst Jessica Ashley and Phillip Stevenson.

*This project was supported by a grant awarded to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority by the Illinois Department of Human Services. Opinions, findings, and conclusions contained in this document are those of the evaluators and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, the Illinois Department of Human Services, or Macon County Redeploy Illinois program administrators.*